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# Economic and Social Council

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**Committee for Programme and Coordination**
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## Draft report

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**Addendum**

## Programme questions

### Report of the Secretary-General on the new narrative for section 7A, Economic and social affairs

1. At its 21st meeting, on 17 June 1998, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the new narrative for section 7A, Economic and social affairs (E/AC.51/1998/6 (sect. 7A)).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs introduced the report and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

**Discussion**

3. Support was expressed for the new narrative and for the consolidation of the former three departments in the economic and social area in the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

4. The view was expressed that the titles of the various subprogrammes were at times inconsistent with the titles in the revised medium-term plan, and that the narrative of each subprogramme should have been accompanied by a statement of objectives under that subprogramme. The view was also expressed that specific performance indicators should have been included in the narrative.

5. A view was expressed that the new narrative was based on the approved medium-term plan and not on programme 28 of the revised medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, which was still under consideration. With regard to references to the report of the Secretary-General on reform (A/51/950), it was noted that such a document did not constitute a

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legislative mandate for the consolidation of the three departments. Concern was expressed that the reduction in the total number of subprogrammes from the original ten in programmes 5, 7 and 8, to eight under the proposed new programme 28, could have an adverse effect on the implementation of the existing mandates. The Committee received details showing that all the mandates and objectives of the former subprogrammes had been maintained in the relevant subprogrammes of section 7A; the scope of technical cooperation activities in the department should be viewed in conjunction with the activities described in section 21, Regular programme of technical cooperation. It was stressed that the reduction of resources in the new department resulted from the consolidation of the three administrative units into one, and not from substantive areas.

[6. It was considered that the mandate for the fact-finding missions to be undertaken by the Division for the Advancement of Women, as well as the role to be played by the host country, should have been more clearly described in paragraph 7A.38. The representative of the Secretariat indicated that the Division for the Advancement of Women participated, at the invitation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and when relevant, in fact-finding missions led by the High Commissioner, in order to provide its expertise on gender and women's issues.]

7. It was considered that the report contained some outdated information which needed to be brought up to date by way of a corrigendum.

8. Satisfaction was expressed at the inclusion of the issue of external debt in subprogramme 7, Global development trends, issues and policies, and it was suggested that this issue be also reflected in the proposed programme 28 of the medium-term plan currently under consideration.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

**9. The Committee commended the inclusion in the programme narrative for section 7A, Economic and social affairs, of quantified targets for a number of outputs. That would help in assessing performance. But the Committee noted that the formulation of objectives in the section could be improved. In particular, there was little indication of the quality of output expected to be achieved, or how progress towards the achievement of objectives should be measured. The Committee expressed concern that without such indicators in the programme narrative, eventual evaluation could not fully determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the programme.**

**10. The Committee therefore recommended that the Secretary-General be requested to improve formulation of objectives and indicators of expected achievement when preparing the proposed programme narrative for this programme for the next biennium.**

**11. The Committee also recommended that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly consider paragraphs 7A.22, 7A.23 and 7A.24 in the light of the ongoing reform process under General Assembly resolution 51/12 B of 19 December 1997.**

**12. The Committee further recommended approval of the new narrative of section 7A, Economic and social affairs, subject to the following modifications:**

**(a)** ***Paragraph 7A.6, first sentence***

**(i)** ***Replace*** **on request** ***with*** **at their request and in accordance with their national policies**

**(ii)** ***After*** **aimed at** ***insert*** **the promotion of**

(iii) *After* sustainable development *insert* , in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences,

(b) *Paragraph 7A.18*

The first sentence of the paragraph *should read*:

The Commission, which acted as the preparatory body for the Fourth World Conference on Women, has a central role within the United Nations system, assisting the Council, in monitoring, reviewing and appraising progress achieved and problems encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Conference at all levels, and advising the Council thereon, in accordance with its strengthened mandate.

(c) *Paragraph 7A.31*

At the end of the third sentence, *insert* , in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences

[(d) *Paragraph 7A.38*

Delete the last sentence]

(e) *Paragraph 7A.49 (c) (ii)*

The last phrase of the paragraph *should read*:

and substantive servicing of 10 meetings, in accordance with relevant decisions and resolutions of the Commission for Social Development, as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council, and the decisions and resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly.

(f) *Paragraph 7A.53*

In the second sentence, *replace* countries *with* States

(g) *Paragraph 7A.75*

(i) In the second sentence, *after* achievements, *insert* as well as constraints and problems

(ii) In the third sentence, *replace* the phrase in parentheses *with* (the developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries)